DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 317 082 FL 018 437

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TITLE Summer Bilingual Program, 1988. OREA Report.
INSTITUTION New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn, NY. Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.
PUB DATE Jun 89
NOTE 18p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Education Programs; *English (Second Language); History; *Limited English Speaking; Mathematics Instruction; *Program Descriptions; Program Evaluation; Science Instruction; Secondary Education; Second Language Programs; Social Studies; Student Placement; *Summer Programs; Teacher Qualifications
IDENTIFIERS Content Area Teaching

ABSTRACT

The 1988 Summer Bilingual Program served 1,171 ninth- through twelfth-graders with limited English proficiency (LEP) at 10 New York City sites. Designed especially for the substantial number of LEP students who were overage for their grade, the program offered 14 English as a Second Language (ESL) and 17 bilingual content area classes in science, math, history, and social studies needed for graduation. Its objectives were to allow students to remain on or get back to their grade level, enable enrichment through additional school courses, and provide sufficiently mature and able students the opportunity to complete their high school programs in less than the normally required time. The program operated in conjunction with regularly-scheduled summer school sessions at each site. Program evaluation was accomplished by staff interviews and observation. Recommendations for program improvement include recruitment of licensed and/or experienced teachers, inclusion of staff development as an ongoing program element, and enlistment of the cooperation of home-school guidance counselors to improve initial screening and placement. (Author/MSE)

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EVALUATION SECTION
John E. Schoener, Chief Administrator
June 1989

# EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

## SUMMER BILINGUAL PROGRAM

## 1988

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5/22/89

## 1988 SUMMER BILINGUAL PROGRAM*
## SUMMARY

- The 1988 Summer Bilingual program was fully implemented. During the 1988 summer session, students received instruction in English as a second language (E.S.L.) and in the bilingual content areas.

The 1988 Summer Bilingual program served 1,171 ninth through twelfth graders with limited English proficiency (LEP) at ten sites in Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. Designed especially for the substantial number of LEP students who were overage for their grade, the program offered students both the E.S.L. and bilingual content area courses that they needed for graduation.

The program's objectives were to: allow students to remain on, or get back to their grade level; enable them to enrich their education through additional school courses; and provide sufficiently mature and able students with the opportunity to complete their high school programs in less than the normally required time. Although the original intent of the program was to provide students with the opportunity to make up courses, it was populated mostly by students who wished to graduate more quickly.

During the 1988 summer session, there were approximately 44 E.S.L. (beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels) and 17 bilingual content area classes (in science, math, history, and social studies) at the designated schools. The program operated in conjunction with the regular summer school sessions at each site. There were three ninety-minute classes during the school day that ran between 8:26 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Only 17 percent of the students attended the content area courses.

The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) evaluated the program by interviewing program administrative, counseling, and teaching staff, and by observing classrooms. Although the project provided quantitative data, OREA misplaced them during a turnover of personnel.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Recruit licensed and/or experienced teachers into the program.

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*This summary is based on the final evaluation of the "1988 Summer Bilingual Program" prepared by the OREA Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit.

- Include staff development as an ongoing part of the summer school program, as it was for the Summer Institute for Career Exploration (ICE) program, particularly for new teachers or those inexperienced in what they were teaching.

- Enlist the cooperation of home-school guidance counselors to improve the initial screening and placement of students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In addition to those whose names appear on the title page, we thank Beth Schlau for editing, Margaret Scorza for coordinating production, and Kristine Gatti for typing the final report.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA) evaluation of the 1988 Summer Bilingual Program. Evaluation procedures included classroom observations and interviews with program administrative, counseling, and teaching staff. Although the project provided quantitative data, OREA misplaced them during a turnover of personnel.

In its second year of operation, and funded by tax-levy monies, the Summer Bilingual program served ninth through twelfth grade students with limited proficiency in English (LEP). The program offered students both English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) courses and the content area courses required for graduation. Students who successfully completed the content area courses received full credit toward graduation.

Research and experience confirm that a substantial number of LEP students are overage for their grade, and overage students are more likely to have school problems, fail courses, and drop out. Several factors account for this. Many of these students have experienced frequent interruptions in their schooling in their native countries; therefore, when they arrive in the United States, the schools cannot place them in the age-appropriate grades. Many are from poor, rural backgrounds where schooling is inadequate and intermittent. Once they arrive in this country, linguistic and cultural differences commonly create significant obstacles to school success, often compounding the educational problems that they bring with them. In addition, they receive no credit for E.S.L. classes and must pass Regents Competency Tests

(R.C.T.s) in science and social studies. All of these conditions increase the likelihood that LEP students will fall further behind their age peers.

The Summer Bilingual program was designed to alleviate these and related problems of LEP students. The primary objectives of the program were to: allow students to remain on, or get back in, grade level; enable students to enrich their education through additional school courses; and provide sufficiently mature and able students with the opportunity to complete their high school programs in less than the normally required time. According to the supervising principal of the Summer Bilingual program, most of the students attended the program in order to accelerate their studies, not to make up classes. Only about 20 percent of the participating students repeated courses that they had previously failed.

The eligibility guidelines reflect the program's goals. Enrollment was open to LEP high school seniors who needed up to three subjects in order to graduate by August 1988, students in grades nine through twelve who had failed subjects (up to two), and students who wished to accelerate their studies.

## II. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Ten sites in Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens offered the 1988 Summer Bilingual Program. The program selected these schools based on a preliminary needs assessment that high school principals conducted in March 1988. Their survey focused particularly on those sites that had both a sizeable population of LEP students and programs to meet their needs.

The program's total enrollment was 1,171. Program size varied a great deal, from five to 358 students. The program operated in conjunction with the regular summer school program, beginning Tuesday, July 5 and ending Friday, August 25. Students attended three ninety-minute classes, from 8:25 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., five days a week.

The program provided E.S.L. at all sites but bilingual content area courses only at three high schools (one each in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens).

The criteria used to place students in particular levels of E.S.L. instruction and in bilingual content area courses included student requests and/or self-assessments, data taken from the students' records, and/or counselors' recommendations. OREA field staff repeatedly encountered criticism about the placement process during interviews with teachers, counselors, and administrative staff. Teachers complained about the different levels of students in the E.S.L. classes; i.e., beginning- and advanced-level students were in the same class, making it very difficult for the teachers to develop lessons.

Criteria for placing students in E.S.L. or bilingual content area classes were nebulous. At one site, for example, the monolingual guidance counselor decided whether or not to place students in the bilingual component. Each student was supposed to come to summer school with a completed "Summer School Application and Transcript Card." The guidance counselor and a bilingual student assistant screened those who walked in without cards or who registered late. The monolingual counselor claimed that many of the students who had been programmed by their bilingual guidance counselors for bilingual summer classes should be placed, instead, in mainstream classes. She redirected the students whom she thought could handle the mainstream classes, since she felt that placing students in bilingual classes often worked to their disadvantage. It slowed the pace at which they learned English, she argued.

In contrast, the itinerant principal and others asserted that students had too few bilingual classes in the various disciplines from which to choose. Despite the program's title, students at only three of the ten sites had substantive bilingual courses through which they could enrich their education.

The Summer Bilingual program did not hold any special staff development activities for teachers. This problem was particularly troublesome because of the large number of unlicensed and/or inexperienced teachers in the program. In addition, no forum existed at which to discuss program problems. Certain problems and issues overlapped with those of the Summer

Institute for Career Exploration program, and it is possible that at least some of the staff development efforts of ICE could also have been available to teachers in the Summer Bilingual program.

## III. CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

### ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSES

The E.S.L. classes that OREA field consultants observed typically focused on grammar and vocabulary.

In a level 2 class at Fort Hamilton High School, students used a text with a conversational approach to the study of grammar. The aim of the lesson was "how to say how people do things." The class began with an oral exercise in which the teachers gave sentences with adjectives and used them to form a similar sentence with an adverb. (He's a good driver/He drives well.) The teacher called on individuals to supply an answer and then used choral repetition to stress both grammar and pronunciation. In a second exercise, students first worked individually and then wrote their answers on the board. In a third drill, the teacher asked questions such as "Does he speak fast?", "Does she speak fast in Spanish?" Students turned the drill into an enjoyable game.

At Eastern District High School an OREA consultant observed an introductory E.S.L. class (levels 1 and 2). The lesson centered on putting regular verbs into the past tense. The teacher used the basic "chalk and talk" methods: written work, board work, reading aloud, and repetition to teach the class. Fifteen students were present on the day of the observation. Several seemed distracted (one fell asleep) and the teacher had trouble keeping their attention. All but two of the students

were repeating the course, having already failed it. Two recent arrivals from Haiti received individual attention from a paraprofessional.

The teacher felt at a distinct disadvantage because this was the first time she was teaching E.S.L. (she is a licensed accounting teacher) and the only training she had received was from the site supervisor's assistant.

In their "conversation" class the theme of the day was shopping. The students were learning how to describe different places to shop in the community. The teacher had arranged a display of store catalogs and advertisements, which she then discussed with the class, asking them questions about the store and what kinds of goods could be obtained there. Near the end of the class period, the class played a guessing game the teacher had prepared. She read descriptions of places to buy things, and the students had to guess the name of the place (flea market, department store, garage sale, etc.). She gave them a homework assignment related to the latter part of the lesson. She asked each student to find two print advertisements and write four sentences about each, telling why she/he would or would not buy what was being advertised. The teacher's one concern was that the students had not been grouped appropriately.

BILINGUAL CONTENT AREA CLASSES

At Taft High School, a field consultant observed both a word processing class and an art class in which several E.S.L. students were enrolled. The word processing teacher said the

students had progressed somewhat, but he expressed some doubt as to whether they would actually be able to pass the final exam. While language was a problem, he reported that bilingual students in his class had been very helpful with their LEP classmates, and he felt that their difficulties were largely because none of them had had typing courses or typing experience before.

The art students seemed to enjoy the opportunity to interact with mainstream students and staff. The E.S.L. instructor told the field consultant that her students sometimes brought their artwork to show to the rest of the E.S.L. group.

Many teachers commented on the high motivation of these students in the content area courses. For example, one teacher said that the summer bilingual students were better than those she taught during the regular school year because they came to class and did the work, mostly because they wanted to learn. One site supervisor commented that the bilingual students who came to summer school were a self-selected, serious group.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 1988 Summer Bilingual program offered students the opportunity to continue their studies of English through E.S.L. classes and to advance their studies of science, mathematics, and other languages through bilingual content area courses. While the original rationale for the program emphasized the importance of providing students (particularly LEP students) with the opportunity to "catch up" and stay on or close to grade level, the program was populated far more heavily by students wishing to advance more quickly toward graduation. Teachers saw these students as more highly motivated and hard-working than their school-year peers and enjoyed working with them during the summer. The students' classroom behavior repeatedly reinforced this impression, leaving our observers with very positive, enthusiastic accounts of the students and teachers in the program.

The conclusions, based upon the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Recruit licensed and/or experienced teachers into the program.

- Include staff development as an ongoing part of the summer school program, as it was for the Summer Institute for Career Exploration (ICE) program. This is particularly important for new teachers or those inexperienced in what they were teaching.

- Enlist the cooperation of home-school guidance counselors to improve the initial screening and placement of students, and provide mechanisms to reassess students' proficiency levels and make adjustments once the program has begun.